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ABSTRACT

While attraction research has repeatedly shown a strong similarity/attraction relationship between perceivers and others, it has not shown that perceivers are repulsed by dissimilar others--only that they seem to withhold judgment and wait for more information about the other before indicating either attraction or dislike. A study investigated the effects of three types of information on the response of perceivers to dissimilar others: level of expectation of others, their verbal message characteristics, and the intent attributed to others. Subjects were 198 college students who responded to stimulus materials that portrayed dissimilar others. An independent groups design with two levels of expectation of evaluation (expressed like or dislike), two levels of message type (open or closed), and two levels of attribution of intent (desire to share or change attitudes) was employed to test subjects' impressions, defensiveness of response, and attraction toward a dissimilar other. The results showed that response to dissimilarity differed significantly with variation in expectation of evaluation and message type, but that responses did not vary in relation to attribution of intent. The study suggests that rewards normally associated with similarity can also be associated with dissimilarity, thus allowing more positive responses to dissimilar others. (FL)

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THE ATTRACTION PARADIGM REVISITED: RESPONSE TO DISSIMILARITY AS A FUNCTION OF EXPECTATION OF EVALUATION, TYPE OF MESSAGE, AND ATTRIBUTION OF INTENT

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INTRODUCTION

A voluminous amount of experimental research has been designed and conducted to show that attitude similarity is a critical determinant of interpersonal attraction. Byrne (1971) and his associates have studied the effect of attitude similarity upon attraction in a great number of studies, conducted with diverse populations and under a wide variety of conditions. The overwhelming majority of the findings in this research has shown that people are more willing to pursue interaction with those they expect to exhibit a manner and an attitude like their own.

The powerful effect of similarity on one's willingness to interact with another person is generally attributed to the function of similarity as a major source of reward in interpersonal encounters (Clore and Byrne, 1974). Assuming that we like ourselves, we are cognitively consistent (Heider, 1956) if we like those who hold attitudes similar to our own. Similar others provide social validation for our beliefs and opinions (Festinger, 1954). Agreeing attitudes evoke anticipatory responses relative to anticipated positive interactive consequences associated with a stranger (Griffitt, 1969 and Berscheid and Walster, 1978). Similar others provide a more promising information-per-time-unit investment (Knapp, 1978 and Miller and Steinberg, 1975). Finally, attitudinal similarity leads to the expectation that we will be liked by the other (Newcomb, 1961 and McWhirter and Jecker, 1967).

While studies clearly show that attitudinal similarity leads to greater attraction than attitudinal dissimilarity, studies do <u>not</u> show that dissimilarity produces repulsion (Crockett and Friedman, 1980). Rather, a close inspection of attraction studies show that dissimilar attitudes

typically induces indifference. The mean "attraction score," using Byrne's (1971) Interpersonal Judgement Scale (IJS), usually falls around midpoint of the scale, indicating a neutral response, when subjects are exposed to a dissimilar other (see Byrne, 1962).

The neutral response to dissimilarity in many attraction studies may be due to the fact that the only information the perceiver is usually given (in the Byrne studies) about the person being rated is the extent to which that person agrees with the perceiver on a set of attitudes. Nothing is known about the nature of that disagreement. The perceiver may be withholding judgement and waiting for more information about the dissimilar other. What kind of information is the perceiver waiting for?

The present study investigated three types of information which, if available to the perceiver, might have an influential effect on attraction to dissimilar others. The following section reviews a number of studies which suggest that the dissimilar other's evaluation of the perceiver, expression of differences to the perceiver, and intention toward the perceiver influence the perceiver's response to dissimilarity.

RESPONSE TO DISSIMILARITY: MODIFYING INFLUENCES

Expectation of Evaluation

One of the rewards associated with similarity is expectation of liking; when we learn others are similar to us we assume they are likely to like us, thus we like them in return. We might choose to associate more often with dissimilar others if one factor were not restraining us -- the fear that we may not be well-liked. Aronson and Worchel (1966) tested this notion in an

experiment where subjects were led to believe that their partners, who possessed attitudes either similar or dissimilar to their own, either enjoyed working with them or had not enjoyed working with them. Instead of the usual similarity-dissimilarity effect, the results showed a main effect for the liking-disliking variable. In a later experiement Byrne and Griffitt (1966) found similar results, except that with a wider range of attitudinal similarity and dissimilarity attraction was influenced by both liking-disliking and by the degree of attitudinal similarity. Walster and Walster (1963) also found that subjects were not hesitant to associate with dissimilar people when they had been assured that people in a group with which they were to work would be predisposed to like them. Those who were instructed that they probably would not be liked by the group members were more anxious to work with similar people.

In a study designed by Byrne (1962), subjects were assigned to one of four groups varying in the proportion of similar attitudes held by a stranger and to one of three groups varying in the stranger's evaluation of the subject's personal attributes. Results indicated that each independent variable and the interaction between them exerted a significant effect on attraction. That is, subjects responded more favorably to those who gave positive evaluations of their attributes and more favorably to those who held similar attitudes. There was a wide difference in responses to dissimilarity in the positive evaluation conditions and the negative evaluation conditions. Rather than the typical "middle-of-the-road" response to dissimilarity, subjects expressed mild attraction toward the dissimilar other who evaluated them positively and strong dislike of the dissimilar other who expressed a low opinion of them.

In a final study to be reviewed here, Mueller (1969, as reported in Byrne, 1971) asked subjects to express either their true attitudes or the reverse of their attitudes to another subject. They then received a televised positive or negative evaluation of themselves given by a stranger who had supposedly read these attitudes. The results showed that not only did subjects feel more attracted toward the confederate who gave positive evaluations of their true attitudes, but also that subjects were more attracted toward those who made positive evaluations of them rather than negative evaluations, even if it were in reference to attitudes which were mirror images of those they actually held.

In light of the above studies it is suggested that one's response to dissimilarity is modified by expectation of evaluation by the other. Some of the ambiguity is removed from dissimilarity when we know whether or not we will be accepted, respected, approved of, and liked by the dissimilar other.

Expression of Differences

Another factor which may influence one's response to dissimilarity is the perceived attitude of the other toward differences. If a person is perceived to hold an attitude different from the perceiver and at the same time is perceived as open to different ways of looking at things, then that dissimilar other may not seem threatening. On the other hand, if the dissimilar other is perceived as closed to discussion on disagreeing opinions, then the perceiver may not be attracted to that person.

The above notion receives support from two studies. Hodges and Byrne (1972) found that dogmatic working (after Rokeach, 1960) increases the challenging or threatening effect of disagreeing attitudes, while open-minded

wording reduces threat. In two experiments subjects responded on the IJS (Byrne's attraction measure) to either similar or dissimilar strangers who stated their opinions in either or open-minded fashion. In both experiments attraction was significantly more positive toward the dissimilar stranger when attitudes were expressed in an open-minded fashion.

Similar results were obtained in a study by Broome (1981). In this study, dissimilar attitudes were presented to subjects through a stranger's use of either open or closed expression. When subjects were presented with attitudes stated in an open manner they responded with a desire to learn more about the other, with a perception of the speaker as open to input, and with less anger and irritation toward the speaker. When the attitudes were stated in a closed manner, subjects had less desire to know the person better, a perception of the speaker as less open to input, and more negative feelings. In addition, subjects' written response to openly stated attitudes of the stranger were judged as less defensive than were responses to attitudes stated in a closed manner.

The studies reviewed above provide evidence to suggest that the effect of dissimilarity may be mediated by the manner in which the different attitudes are expressed to another. While disagreeing attitudes expressed in an open manner may not actually provide social validation for one's beliefs (validation being one of the rewards of similarity), it probably lessens the threat associated with disagreeing attitudes. Thus, it is proposed that attraction to a dissimilar other is increased when the other expresses difference in a manner which implies openness to discussion and respect for different opinions.

Attribution of Intent

One of the hesitancies individuals feel toward interaction with dissimilar others may center on a fear of being controlled or changed. Sarbough (1979) suggests that if the intent of the other is perceived to be one of obstructing the achievement of understanding, then little energy will be expended in a transaction. Interaction is usually avoided with those whose perceived intent is to change attitudes. On the other hand, if the other appears interested in sharing opinions or promoting learning, then the perceiver may be more interested in associating with the other and may committ whatever energy is necessary to achieve coordinated action.

Partial support for the notion that attraction is moderate by perceived intent of the other is found in a study by Batchelor and Tesser (1971). These researchers gave subjects information about others which included the other's attitude on a topic (similar or dissimilar) and the other's reason for holding the attitude. They found that nor only were subjects more attracted to the similar other than the dissimilar other (the usual result) but that dissimilar others were perceived as more or less attractive depending on the reason given for the attitude. These results give credence to the notion that once individuals know more about the intentions of the dissimilar other they may be more (or less) eager to talk with them or work together with them.

While there is not as much empirical evidence as would be desired, it seems reasonable to assert that one's attraction to another will vary depending upon the attribution made of the other's intent in communicating dissimilar attitudes. Individuals may ask, when confronted with a dissimilar other: "Will this person try to change by views?" If answered affirmatively, the other may be avoided. If answered negatively, individuals may not be as hesitant to associate with the other.

SUMMARY AND HYPOTHESES

The review of the literature covered in the previous section revealed three variables that might affect our response to a dissimilar other. First, it seems important to have information regarding the other's evaluation of us. Second, message characteristics of the other's verbal expression of different attitudes seems to play an important role in our response to that person. Third, the intent attributed to the dissimilar other seems to influence our response to that person. These three variables, Expectation of Evaluation, Type of Message, and Attribution of Intent, provide the focus of investigation in this study.

Three sets of hypotheses were developed for testing in the present study. Hypotheses I (a, b, c), Hypotheses II (a, b, c) and Hypotheses III (a, b, c) predicted, respectively, that individuals will report a more positive impression of a dissimilar other, that written response to communication of differences will be evaluated as less defensive, and that individuals will report greater attraction toward a dissimilar other in conditions of (a) positive as opposed to negative evaluation, (b) open as opposed to closed expression, and (c) intent to share as opposed to change.

These hypotheses were tested in a single experiment involving eight conditions. A 2 x 2 x 2 independent groups design with two levels of Expectation of Evaluation (expressed like or dislike), two levels of Type of Message (open or closed), and two levels of Attribution of Intent (desire to share or desire to change attitudes) was employed. Instruments were constructed to measure impressions, defensiveness of response, and attraction.

PROCEDURES

The context for the experiment involved American student's responses to stimulus material which portrayed a dissimilar other. The stimulus material consisted of a transcript of a fictitious interview with a "foreign student" who stated attitudes and opinion predominately opposed to those of American cultural values (i.e., the interviewee indicated that he prefered a religious government, ancient methods of punishment, and a non-capitalist economic system.).[1] The stimulus material reflected the eight experimental conditions. Variable 1, Expectation of Evaluation, was manipulated by responses near the beginning of the interview which indicated that the foreign student either liked all Americans and held a positive image of them or else disliked Americans and held a negative image of them. Variable 2, Type of Expression, was manipulated by responses to questions in the middle part of the interview which were stated in either and open or closed manner (After Broome, in press). Variable 3, Attribution of Intent, was manipulated by responses near the end of the interview which indicated a desire to either share ideas with Americans or to change the ideas of Americans.

Subjects were students enrolled in the basic communication courses of a large midwestern univeristy. Subjects volunteered for the study and received course credit for their participation. A total of 118 women and 80 men (N = 198) particiapted in the study.

Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the eight experimental conditions and instructed to read the stimulus material and then respond to a five-part questionnaire. The first three parts of the questionnaire

(described below) asked for data that provided for tests of the hypotheses. The final two parts of the questionnaire asked, respectively, for information that might help interpret responses on the dependent measures and for demographic data. Following the collection of data, all subjects were debriefed.

DEPENDENT MEASURES

Personal Judgement Differential

A special instrument was constructed to determine the impression formed of the stimulus person by the subjects. Items for this instrument were obtained by conducting a pilot study (using four of the experimental conditions of the present study) in which subjects were asked to provide an open-ended description of the characteristics they believed best described the stimulus person (using the same transcripts as in the present study). Characteristics given in these responses were used to create an instrument containing 20 adjective pairs.[2] These adjective pairs were each placed on seven-point bi-polar scales to form the Personal Judgement Differential (PJD). The order of the 20 items was randomly determined and the position of the positive attribute in 10 of the items was reversed to guard against response bias. The PJD was included as Part I of the questionnaire booklet. Results from analysis of the PJD were used to evaluate the first set of hypotheses proposed for the experiment.

Defensive Response Evaluation Differential

The second dependent measure used in the study was designed to evaluate subject's responses on Part II of the questionnaire, which asked subjects to write their response to a criticism of American society made by the stimulus person. Following the data-gathering process, 4 judges independently rated the subjects' responses on the Defensive Response Evaluation Differential (DRED), consisting of 5 seven-point bi-polar scales. The scales were taken from Broome (1981) and included the following dimensions:
(1) evaluative/descriptive, (2) control-oriented/problem-oriented,
(3) unreceptive/receptive, (4) self-oriented/other-oriented, and
(5) detached/involved. An inter-rater reliability score of .815 was obtained. Results from analysis of the DRED were used to test the second set of hypotheses.

Perceived Attraction Questionnaire

A special instrument was designed to assess the degree of attraction felt by the subjects toward the stimulus person. Sixteen Likert-type statements were constructed to form the Perceived Attraction Questionnaire (PAQ). Each item was placed above a seven-point scale on which subjects were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement-disagreement with the statement. Six of the items directly related to attraction of the subject toward the stimulus person. These items were patterned after Byrne's (1971) conceptualization of attraction (an expression of liking and a willingness to cooperated with the stimulus person), and they included the two attraction items used by Byrne in his Interpersonal Judgement Scales (IJS). The other items used by Byrne in the questionnaire included four manipulation checks and other statements

designed to provide comparisions based on intuitive speculations. The statements were randomly worded positively or negatively to guard against response bias. The PAQ was included as Part III of the questionnaire, and results obtained were used to test the third set of hypotheses.

RESULTS

Report of Manipulation Checks

As the stimulus material was designed to create a dissimilar other and to manipulate the three independent variables, four items were embedded in Part III of the questionnaire (the PAQ) to provide checks for these attempted manipulations. Results showed that a "dissimilar other" had been successfully created by the stimulus material and that Expectation of Evaluation and Type of Message had been successfully manipulated. However, there was no evidence to indicate that Attribution of Intent was successfully manipulated.

Impression of Stimulus Person

The first set of hypotheses (Ia, Ib, Ic) predicted that individuals would report a more positive impression of a dissimilar other under conditions of positive evaluation, open expression, and intent to share than under the corresponding negative conditions. Responses on the Personal Judgement Differential (PJD) were used to test these hypotheses.

Responses to the 20 items of the PJD were first used to establish a correlation matrix for a factor analysis. Initial factoring of the correlation matrix indicated the presence of five factors that accounted for 60.1% of the total variance in responses. Factor I accounted for 51.7% of the

explained variance, and Factor II accounted for 18.8% of the explained variance. Performing an orthogonal rotation using the Kaiser normalized varimax procedure, five items loaded cleanly on Factor I, and two items loaded unambiguously on Factor II. The other three factors were not interpretable. Table 1 lists the items retained from Factor I for use in further analyses, along with their primary loadings, and Table 2 lists items retained from Factor II along with their primary loadings.

(Table 1 and 2 about here)

Items on Factor I reflect subjects' assessment of the stimulus person's degree of dogmatism, and items on Factor II reflect their assessment of the stimulus person's degree of expertness.

To test Hypotheses Ia, Ib, and Ic, a three-way analysis of variance was performed on respondents' summary scores for the five items of the Dogmatism Dimension of the PJD. The pattern of results from this analysis indicated main effects for Expectation of Evaluation ($F = 16.25$, $df = 1,190$, $p < .001$) and for Type of Message ($F = 45.80$, $df = 1,190$, $p < .001$). The results showed no difference in perceptions of the stimulus person in relation to Attribution of Intent ($F = 1.96$, $df = 1,190$, $p > .05$, n.s.). All means were in the expected direction (see Table 3). Thus, support is gained for Hypotheses Ia and Ib, but there is no evidence to support Hypothesis Ic.

(Table 3 about here)

Since the fictitious interview constructed for use in this study was intended to portray a competent and intelligent person, it was not expected that varying the independent variables would affect subjects' perceptions of the Expertness of the stimulus person. A three-way analysis of variance conducted for the summary score of items on the Expertness Dimension of the PJD showed no significant main effects and no interactions between the three independent variables.

Written Response to Stimulus Person

The second set of hypotheses (IIa, IIb, IIc) predicted that individuals' written responses to a dissimilar other would be evaluated as less defensive under conditions of positive evaluation, open expression, and intent to share than under the corresponding negative conditions. Judges' ratings on the Defensive Response Evaluation Differential (DRED) were used to test these hypotheses.

Ratings on the 5 items of the DRED were first used to establish a correlation matrix for a factor analysis. Initial factorings of the correlation matrix indicated the presence of a single factor that accounted for 90.0% of the total variance in responses. All five items of the DRED loaded on this single factor. Table 4 lists these items and their associated factor loadings.

(Table 4 about here)

To test Hypotheses IIa, IIb, and IIc a three-way analysis of variance was performed on summary scores for the five items of the DRED. The pattern of

results from this analysis indicated a main effect for Expectation of Evaluation ($F = 4.25$, $df = 1,190$, $p < .05$). The results showed no main effects for Type of Message ($F = 1.96$, $df = 1,190$, $p > .05$, n.s.) or for Attribution of Intent ($F = 1.00$, $df = 1,190$, $p > .05$, n.s.). All means were in the expected direction (see Table 5). Thus, support is gained for Hypothesis IIa, but there is no evidence to support Hypotheses IIb or IIc.

(Table 5 about here)

Attraction to Stimulus Person

The third set of hypotheses (IIIa, IIIb, IIIc) predicted that individuals would report greater attraction toward a dissimilar other under conditions of positive evaluation, open expression, and intent to share than under the corresponding negative conditions. Responses on the Perceived Attraction Questionnaire (PAQ) were used to test these hypotheses.

Responses to the 16 items of the PAQ were first used to establish a correlation matrix for a factor analysis. Initial factoring of the correlation matrix indicated the presence of four factors which accounted for 65.9% of the total variance in responses. Factor I accounted for 69% of the explained variance and was the only interpretable factor. Nine items loaded unambiguously on Factor I. Table 6 lists the items retained from this factor for use in further analysis, along with their primary loadings. Items on Factor I reflect subjects' perceived attraction toward the stimulus person.

(Table 6 about here)

To test hypotheses IIIa, IIIb, and IIIc a three-way analysis of variance was performed on respondents' summary scores for the nine items of the Attraction Dimension of the PAQ. The results from this analysis indicated main effects for Expectation of Evaluation ($F = 19.12$, $df = 1,190$, $p<.001$), Types of Message ($F = 19.90$, $df = 1,190$, $p<.001$), and Attribution of Intent ($F = 4.13$, $df = 1,190$, $p < .05$). All means were in the expected direction (see TAble 7). Thus, evidence is gained to support Hypotheses IIIa, IIIb, and IIIc.

(Table 7 about here)

DISCUSSION

The focus of this investigation has been upon response to dissimilarity as a function of Expectation of Evaluation, Type of Message, and Attribution of Intent. Variation of these three variables was predicted to affect impressions formed of a dissimilar other, verbal responses to a dissimilar other, and attraction toward a dissimilar other. Of the nine hypotheses which were proposed for this study, six of them received support from results on the three dependent measures (the PJD, the DRED, and the PAQ). Table 8 presents a summary of these results.

(Table 8 about here)

The pattern of results lends strong support hypothese related to Variable 1, Expectation of Evaluation, and Variable 2, Type of Message. The results

lend only partial support to hypotheses related to Variable 3, Attribution of Intent. All three of the hypotheses (Ia, IIa, and IIIa) proposed for the effects of Expectation of Evaluation were confirmed by responses to the three dependent measures. Two of the hypotheses (Ib and IIIb) proposed for the effects of Type of Message were confirmed by responses to the Personal Judgment Differential and the Percieved Attraction Questionnaire. Only one of the hypotheses (IIIc) proposed for the effects of Attibution of Intent was confirmed, this being through responses to the Perceived Attraction Questionnaire. The remainder of this section discusses these results in more detail.

Expectation of Evaluation

It was proposed that individuals might choose to associate more often with dissimilar others if there was some assurance that they would be liked and positively evaluated by the dissimilar other. Results of this study strongly support this notion. Individuals reported a more positive impression, responded less defensively, and felt more attraction in response to a dissimilar other who was expected to like them. These findings suggest that Expectation of Evaluation plays a crucial role in one's response to someone who holds different attitudes or cultural patterns.

The results of this study relative to Expectation of Evaluation confirm predictions made by both popular advice and social psychologists. Popular advice tells us that if we want to "win friends and influence people," then we should be "lavish in our praise" of others. It was the philosopher Hecato (2nd century B.C) who wrote: "I will show you a love, potion without drug or herb or any witch's spell; if you wish to be loved, love." Berscheid and

Walster (1978) term this an example of the "recipro-city-of-liking rule" proposed by Newcomb (1961). These researchers review a variety of studies which suggest that, as a consequence of our discovery that another likes us, we may become attracted to him or her.

It is suggested by Berscheid and Walster (1978) that perhaps the reason for the reciprocity-of-liking phenomenon is that social approval is a powerful "transsituational reinforcer." This is reflected in our society by the amount of time, money and effort people spend to obtain the admiration and affection of others. Research such as that by Greenspoon (1955) further reinforces this notion. Greenspoon demonstrated that the number of plural ncuns used by an individual can be dramatically increased by simple head nods and murmurs of approval each time the individual uses a plural noun.

If expectation of liking by the other serves as a social reward, results of this investigation suggest that this "reward" is not limited to similar others. While we may automaticaly assume that similar others will like us, knowing that a dissimilar other thinks highly of us will increase the positivity of our response toward that person. Perhaps one of the things we "fear" about dissimilar others is that we will not be liked. Once this fear is reduced, a major obstacle to interaction with that person is removed.

Type of Message

It was proposed that individuals' tolerance for dissimilarity would increase when the other was perceived as open-minded. Results of the present study tend to support this notion. Individuals reported a more positive impression and felt more attracted toward a dissimilar other who used open expression to state attitudes, although there was no difference in

defensiveness of response to an open-minded other as opposed to a closed-minded other. These findings suggest that Type of Message plays an important role in one's tolerance for dissimilar others' attitudes and opposing views.

While two of the dependent measures used in the present study (the PJD and the PAQ) produced results strongly in favor of the proposed relation between Type of Message and response to a dissimilar other, evaluation of subjects' responses on the DRED showed no difference between experimental conditions. Subjects responded as defensively to open-minded dissimilar others as to closed-minded others. A close examination of the instruction given to subjects in Part II of the questionnaire booklet indicates the reason for this lack of difference.

Subjects were instructed to write their response to a statement made by the stimulus person. The state criticized Americans for lack of understanding the situation of foreign students. It was relatively clear from the manipulation checks and from responses on the PJD that subjects viewed the stimulus person who used open expression to be more open-minded that the stimulus person who used closed expression. This indicates that subjects in the different conditions were responding to different impressions of the stimulus person when they wrote their verbal reply to this person. However, all subjects responded to the same statement made by the stimulus person. Inspection of this statement shows that it was somewhat closed in its wording. It seems, then, that even though subjects in some conditions saw the person to whom they were responding as open, the statement to which they responded was worded in a closed manner.

This unanticipated finding has interesting implications. In a previous study (Broome, 1981), it had been shown that responses to open expression were

less defensive than responses to closed expression. The present study shows that responses to an open-minded individual do not differ in defensiveness from responses to a closed-minded individual when the statement to which one is responding is worded in a closed manner. Quite simply, what this suggests is that the nature of an individual's verbal response to another person is based upon the type of message communicated and not necessarily upon the kind of person to whom one is communicating. In other words, even though an individual is viewed as open-minded, if that individual expresses an opposing idea in a closed manner, responses will tend to be defensive. This finding corresponds with the "norm of reciprocity" notion, which suggests that there is a strong tendency on the part of individuals to respond in kind to behavior of the other (Leary, 1955).

Other than the lack of difference in evaluation of subjects' responses on the DRED, for which the above discussion offers a possible explanation, manipulation of Type of Message produced a strong difference on the dependent measures. The suggestion is made here that intolerance of dissimilarity may be related to threat to one's view of reality. As discussed earlier, the attitudes of others are important to us because we depend on one another as sources of information about most aspects of the world around us. As Festinger (1950) proposed, "if there are other people around (us) who believe the same thing, then (our) opinion is to (us) valid. If there are not others who believe the same thing, then (our) opinion is, in the same sense, not valid (p. 272)." In the same sense that similarity validates one's beliefs, dissimilarity arouses an affective state which is unpleasurable with a negative emotion tone. The result of encountering another whose attitudes are different from one's own is tenseness, uneasiness, a sense of unreality, and

confusion. There appears to be, then, a negative response to stimuli which are to varying degrees unfamiliar, unpredictable, and unexpected. Our orientation to understand and make predictable our environment (Kelly, 1963) is threatened by dissimilarity, according to this view.

What the results of the present study show is that dissimilarity is not necessarily threatening in and of itself. Dissimilar attitudes communicated in an open manner seem to produce minimal threat. However, when dissimilar attitudes are expressed in a closed manner, a negative response to the other is likely to result. Thus, it is suggested that it is not dissimilarity per se that threatens one's view of reality; rather it is when dissimilarity calls into qustion one's beliefs that threat is produces.

It does not seem reasonable, then, given the findings of this study, to dismiss dissimilarity as threatening and endorse similarity as the "rewarding option." Perhaps open expression reduces the threat normally associated with dissimilarity and helps differences to be viewed in a more positive light. Thus, an important variable related to the consequences of dissimilarity is the manner in which the differences are expressed.

Attribution of Intent

It was proposed that response to dissimilar others would be more positive when the dissimilar other expresses no intention to change the attitudes of the perceiver. Results of this study lend only partial support to this notion. While individuals felt more attraction toward a dissimilar other who expressed desire to share rather than intent to change, they did not form a more positive impression, and written responses were not evaluated as less defensive.

The lack of difference is response to variation in Attribution of Intent can possibly be explained by the unsuccessful manipulation of this variable. Perhaps most individuals have a "show me" attitude in connection with judging the intent of another. That is, one doesn't necessarily believe that another desires to share differences with them (rather than change their attitudes) just because the other verbally states this intention. Most likely, individuals make attributions concerning the intent of the other through observation of behavior related to this intention. A verbal statement of intent made by the other (which provided the attempted manipulation in this study) does not constitute a sufficient basis for an attribution concerning their true intent. "Actions not words" may characterize the thinking of individuals in relation to the third variable. This kind of information may demand more knowledge than is provided in a transcript of an interview. Perhaps information of this sort is gained through interaction with the other.

Thus, findings of the present study call for caution to be exercised in making any suggestions about the role of Attribution of Intent in response to a dissimilar other. However, it does not seem reasonable to dismiss the notion that individuals respond more positively to dissimilar others whose intention is to share rather than change. A stronger or more behavioral manipulation may lead to clearer results.

Limitations of the Present Study

Interpretation of the results presented in this study should take into account the findings of a recent study by Sunnafrank and Miller (1980). These researchers replicated the typical Byrne experiment on attraction, except that half of the participants were allowed to engage in an initial interaction with

their partner and the other half were not allowed this interaction. The results of their study showed that, while attitudinally similar non-interactants were more attracted to their partners than dissimialr non-interactants, no differences in attraction were observed among similar and dissimialr interactants. Also, dissimilar interactants were more attracted to their partners than dissimilar non-interactants, but no differences in attraction were observed between similar interactants and non-interactants. In other words, with those individuals who did not engage in interaction, the usual result of attraction studies was found -- similar others were more attractive than dissimilar others. In addition, the opportunity to interact with one's similar partner apprently made no difference in attraction, but interaction increased attraction toward dissimilar others.

While the above discussion reinforces the notion that more information about dissimilar others can significantly affect attraction, it also provides a warning that the present study is limited both in effects and in generalization outside the non-interactive laboratory situation, because no face-to-face interaction was present between the subject and stimulus person. The stronger effects of actual interaction on attraction are discussed by Levinger and Snoek (1972). They point to the difference between attitudes toward persons and attitudes toward non-persons, saying that we react to things but interact with persons. Re acting to a relative stranger of the "pencil-and-paper" variety is much different from interaction with another person. The subject-object relation of perceiver and stimulus has produced consequences that may be much different from those resulting from the subject-subject relation that characterizes interpersonal relationships. The next step should be to replicate the design of the present study under conditions of actual interaction between "subject" and "stimulus person".

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most significant contribution of the study is the overall finding that responses to dissimilar others vary according to the manner in which the other is perceived. Much of the previous research on attraction has focused on the difference between responses to similar versus dissimilar others. The present study shows that dissimilarity cannot be dismissed as "unacceptable" to perceivers, when a range of responses to dissimilarity is available and is influenced by perhaps a host of variables. Conceptualizations of attraction need to take into account that similarity may not be the variable that produces attraction; rather it is probably the rewards that individuals associate with similarity that produces attraction to similar others. Perhaps it is possible for perceivers to associate these same rewards with dissimilarity, attraction being enhanced accordingly. More research is needed which attempts to uncover the rewards associated with attraction. Attempts then need to be made which link such rewards to dissimilar others, measuring the corresponding effect on response to the other. Hopefully, individuals can learn to anticipate positive interaction with, rather than avoid, persons of different beliefs, races and cultures.

ENDNOTES

[1]The interview contained six disagreeing attitudes and two agreeing attitudes.

[2]The adjective pairs contained in the PJD are the following:

Impolite/Polite, Typical/Untypical, Open-minded/Closed-minded, Rejecting/Accepting, Honest/Deceptive, Consistent/Inconsistent, Prejudiced/Non-prejudiced, Cooperative/Uncooperative, Conservative/Liberal, Mal-adjusted/Well-adjusted, Stubborn/Flexible, Likable/Unlikable, Unreasonable/Reasonable, Caring/Non-caring, Religious/Secular, Unbiased/Biased, Informed/Uninformed, Undependable/Dependable, Narrow-minded/Broad-minded, Knowledgable/Ignorant

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Table 1

Factor I and Associated Loadings: Dogmatism

(Personal Judgement Differential)

Item	Associated Loading
Stubborn / Flexible	.845
Narrow-minded / Broad-minded	.790
Open-minded / Closed-minded	.784
Prejudiced / Non-prejudiced	.695
Rejecting / Accepting	.650

Table 2

Factor II and Associated Loadings: Expertness

(Personal Judgement Differential)

Item	Associated Loading
Informed / Uninformed	.837
Knowledgeable / Ignorant	.809

Table 3

Group Means for Dogmatism Dimension*

(Personal Judgement Differential)

	ATTRIBUTION OF INTENT			
	Share		Change	
TYPE OF MESSAGE	Open	Closed	Open	Closed
EXPECTATION OF EVALUATION				
Like	23.42	15.68	21.88	15.68
Dislike	17.52	14.12	16.88	11.63

*Means represent summary scores with a possible range from 5 (negative impression) to 35 (positive impression)

Table 4

Unrotated Alpha Factor Matrix

(Defensive Response Evaluation Differential)

Item	Associated Loading
Evaluative/Descriptive	.927
Control-oriented/Problem-oriented	.951
Unreceptive/Receptive	.953
Self-oriented/Other-oriented	.959
Detached/Involved	.954

Table 5

Group Means for Defensive Scales*

(Defensive Response Evaluation Differential)

ATTRIBUTION OF INTENT				
	Share		Change	
TYPE OF MESSAGE	Open	Closed	Open	Closed
EXPECTATION OF EVALUATION				
Like	19.08	18.60	18.08	16.80
Dislike	18.88	12.96	14.56	14.71

*Means represents summary scores with a possible range from 5 (high defensiveness) to 35 (low defensiveness)

Table 6

Factor I and Associated Loadings: Attraction

(Predicted Attraction Questionnaire)

Item	Associated Loading
I feel that I would probably like this person.	.876
I would enjoy having this person as a friend.	.791
I think it would be easy to work with this person.	.779
I would get along well with this person as a teamate on a group project.	.753
I would have a lot of trouble cooperating with this person.	.716
This person would probably like me.	.715
I believe that I would dislike working with this person in an experiment.	.712
This person would respect my point of view on things.	.704
This person would not welcome input from me regarding the statements he/she made.	.634

Table 7

Group Means for Attraction Dimension*

(Perceived Attraction Questionnaire)

	ATTRIBUTION OF INTENT			
	Share		Change	
TYPE OF MESSAGE	Open	Closed	Open	Closed
EXPECTATION OF EVALUATION				
Like	44.17	38.76	44.24	35.28
Dislike	39.24	33.88	35.04	30.38

*Means represent summary scores with a possible range from 9 (no attraction to 63 (strong attraction)

Table 8

Summary of Results

Significance Level for Tests of Experimental Hypotheses

INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	Expectation of Evaluation	Type of Message	Attribution of Intent
DEPENDENT MEASURE			
*Personal Judgement Differential (PJD)	.001	.001	n.s.
**Defensive Response Evaluation Differenital (DRED)	.05	n.s.	n.s.
***Percieved Attraction Questionnaire (PAQ)	.001	.001	.05

*Provided tests of Hypotheses IA, IB, and Ic, respectively.

**Provided tests of Hypothese IIA, IIB, and IIc, respectively.

***Provided tests of Hypotheses IIIa, IIIb, and IIIc, respectively.